



A
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY

O X F O R D.





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O N
A C T-S U N D A Y,

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S E R M O N.



PROVERBS, Chap. xix, Ver. 2.

—*That the Soul be without Knowledge, is not good.*

FROM the Sacred Historian's Account of the Original Creation of Man, we learn, that it was preceded by a solemn Consultation of the Blessed Trinity, in these Words: *Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness.* In what Particulars this Likeness consisted, hath been a Question, rather frequently agitated,

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than satisfactorily resolved : But perhaps much Uncertainty on the Subject might have been prevented, by a little Attention to that Passage in one of St. *Paul's* Epistles, which speaks of our Renewal *after the Image of GOD in Righteousness and true Holiness*. This leaves us no Room to doubt, that our Similitude to GOD consisted in the Innocence and Purity of our Nature, supported by continual Supplies of Divine Illumination, and preserved by a familiar Intercourse with Heaven.

BUT Sin, introduced by the Violation of a positive Command, brought with it not only a Depravation of the Will and Affections, but also Weakness and Disorder in the Intellectual Faculties : And from that Hour, a Complaint hath prevailed, justly grounded on the Universal Experience of Mankind, that *the Corruptible Body presseth down the Soul, and the earthy Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind ; which, musing upon many Things, too often fails of Satisfaction on Topics of a Spiritual and Heavenly Nature. For hardly do we guess aright at Things, which are upon Earth ; and with Labour do we find the Things*
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which are before us: Much less can we search out the Things of Heaven, or know the Counsel of God, except HE give us Wisdom, and send his Holy Spirit from above.

THUS degenerate is the Human Understanding in its present Condition; thus fallen from that Beauty, Strength, and Perfection in which it was originally created. The Mind, which, in our State of Innocence, was blest with a clear and unclouded Perception of Heavenly Things, hath now the same Need, which the Affections have, of a Renewal, by the Divine Grace, which our Redeemer hath obtained for fallen Man; and it is become our indispensable Duty to *put on the New Man, which is renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of Him that created us.*

BUT as the Gracious Assistance, vouchsafed to us from Above for this Great and Excellent Purpose, is so far from precluding, that it certainly supposes and implies the Exertion of our own active Endeavors to improve and adorn our Nature to the Utmost Extent of its Capacity, it may not be unworthy of our present Attention,

to point out the most effectual *Human Means*, whereby our Intellectual Faculties, through the co-operative Aid of Divine Grace, may be strengthened and enlarged, and the Evils, to which Sin hath exposed them, may be, in some Degree, repaired.

IN discoursing on which Subject, we are led to include within the following Particulars, whatsoever Species of Literature is most materially ornamental or useful to Mankind.

First. *A competent Knowledge of Languages.*

Secondly. *An accurate Acquaintance with the Records of History.*

Thirdly. *A wise Improvement of our rational Powers.*

Fourthly. *An Ability to solve and explain the Phænomena of Nature ; and,*

Fifthly. *An Attainment of the Graces of Elocution.*

EACH of these hath a Claim to our particular Consideration ; whilst we constantly keep in our View the Subserviency of them all to the Purposes and Interests of true Religion. For this it is, which stamps a real Value on all our Attainments ;

ments; and gives Solidity and Substance to those Accomplishments, which otherwise are lighter than Vanity, and too often, alas! have proved extremely injurious to Society.

AND IFT, as to *the Study of Languages*.

WE dare not adventure into the Ocean of Science, without that Sort of Critical Knowledge, which may secure us from Error, while the Mind is in Quest of Satisfaction on Points of the utmost Importance and Concern. The Study of Languages therefore justly claims our earliest Attention, when the Mind is most free from Prejudice and Embarrassment, and its Faculties are peculiarly susceptible of Elementary Institution. The Necessity and Usefulness of this Knowledge will evidently appear, when we consider that it opens to us the genuine Signification of Authors of the most venerable Antiquity, and introduces us to a familiar Intercourse with the Learned of the most distant Countries: That it enables us thoroughly to enter into the Design of the Historian, the Elocution of the Orator, the Fancy of the Poet, and the Researches
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of the Philosopher: That it facilitates and enlarges our Enquiries, which would be carried on, under great Disadvantages, and in a very imperfect Manner, within the Limits of our own Language: That it renders us competent Judges of the real Merit of such as assume the Character of *Literati* amongst us: That it enables us to detect the Fallacy of spurious Pretences to Critical Learning, and to give the Honor, which is justly due to honest and judicious Industry. In a Word, that it guards us against every Species of Imposition, of a literary Kind, on our Understanding, and especially on Religious Subjects. We are not ignorant, that where an open Assault would have been defeated, the most dangerous Attempts have been obliquely made, to wrest, by Misinterpretation, those Scriptures, whose Divine Authority the Adversary hath not presumed avowedly to disclaim and deny. This Species of malevolent Impiety is then most successfully opposed, when our Zeal for the Honor of Divine Truth is supported by an accurate Acquaintance with the Languages in which the Scriptures were
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originally delivered to Mankind; which Consideration, I must acknowledge, strongly recommends to us, and to those especially, who are intended for the Ministry of the Gospel, a serious Application to the Hebrew Language; of whose comprehensive Precision and unparalleled Sublimity the most excellent Things have been spoken by those, who have made the happiest and most beneficial Advancement in that Sacred Study. Yet after all, is it to be remembered, that to be well skilled in Languages is only to be in Possession of an excellent Mean, but not to have arrived at the End, of Knowledge: And that a meer *Philologist* is only another Name for a learned Trifler. So far as this Knowledge is considered to be the Ground-work of a liberal Education, and an Introduction to other Learning, it is highly worthy of our Attention and Esteem; but being unduly estimated, it degenerates at once into Pedantry and Folly.

THE second necessary Ingredient in a learned Education, I observed, is *an accurate Acquaintance with the Records of History*: Within which I include, as ne-

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cessary Parts of it, a *Chronological* Knowledge of the several *Epocha's*, as well as a *Geographical* Knowledge of the several *Countries*, in which the signal Dispensations of Providence have been displayed to the World. '

THIS Study, however worthy of our Pursuit, needs fewer Arguments in its Favor, as it brings with itself the strongest Recommendation to a Preference in our Esteem. The Establishment and Revolutions, the Progress and Decay of Empires, the Religion and Laws, the Manners and Customs, of the different Nations of the World, the Devastations of War, and the Re-establishment of Peace, are all of them so interesting, as not only to *invite*, but to *command* our Attention: We feel ourselves almost irresistibly become a Party in the Occurrences related.

NEITHER doth this Engagement of the Mind *then* cease to delight, when it is most pregnant with useful Instruction. On the contrary, how do our Hearts *burn* within us, when we review the wonderful Accomplishment of the Divine Predictions; and so many important Events
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conspiring to vindicate the Honor and Truth of God ? How are we filled at once with Admiration and Delight ? What Strength and Confidence doth our Faith receive from such undeniable Evidence of the Providence of God ? Yea rather, what Conviction doth it afford to our Minds, that the LORD *looketh down from Heaven upon the Children of Men* ; that from His Throne He regardeth, and with Infinite Wisdom and Goodness ordereth, the Affairs of every Nation, and of every Individual upon Earth ? This then is the Clew, by which our Historical Researches may be most profitably pursued ; and is such therefore, as no one ought ever to lose hold of, in his Application to this Branch of Useful Knowledge.

THE Method and Order in which our Study of History is to be conducted, is a Topic, which I shall for the present decline, as exceeding the Limits of Discourses of this Kind : I shall only beg Leave to observe (in Concurrence with Writers of the best Authority) that we certainly ought rather to begin with what is contained in the Sacred Writings, than

with the Traditions of false Gods, and the Atchievements of feigned Heroes. For if we search for the *Origin* of Things, where shall we begin, if not at the Creation of the Universe, and the Formation of Man? If *Truth* be the Object of our Enquiry, where is it to be found, if not in those Writings, in which it is proclaimed by the Mouth of the Living God? If we look for Subjects really great and important, what can be more magnificent or interesting, than those illustrious Monuments, in which the Holy Commandments of God, the saving Promises, the certain Oracles, and other Helps to our Salvation are comprehended? Whence can we derive more eminent Examples of Virtue, or more powerful Dissuasives from Vice? Where shall we find Actions more worthy of Memory, than in those Sacred Records? In which alone it is apparently discovered, how much Mankind hath been relieved by the powerful and present Assistance of God, in the Exercise of true Religion; or in the Neglect of it, hath been trodden down and ruined by His Anger.

3dly. THE Faculties of the Mind having now attained to a Degree of Maturity, are supposed capable of an higher and more noble Exertion of their Power; and we are in the next Place required to take more than a superficial View of Subjects; to judge with Precision, to define with Perspicuity, and to discourse with Propriety, in a well digested Method on any Argument proposed. In our Way towards this Species of Improvement, we enjoy every possible Assistance in the Course of our Academical Education: The first Intention of which is to inculcate the Rudiments of this useful Science; whose Province it is, to introduce us to the Knowledge of ourselves; to demonstrate the Extent of our Intellectual Powers; and enable us to discern, what are the Subjects to which they are best adapted. To limit our Enquiries, and restrain our Thoughts from wandering into those Depths, wherein no Footing can be found; but within which, we should certainly be lost in Doubt and Scepticism: Or, as a great Master of the Subject hath expressed himself, “ To determine the *Horizon*,
which

which sets Bounds between the enlightened and dark Parts of Things, between what is, and what is not comprehensible by us : That we may with less Scruple acquiesce in the avowed Ignorance of the *One*, and employ our Thoughts and Discourse with more Advantage on the *other*."

IT is true indeed, that the *Forms* of Logic are not always necessary ; but the *Power and Effect* of it never cease to be so. A Man may defend himself against an *Affassin*, not rigidly in the Forms of Defence, tho' he *may*, and certainly *will*, find his Security in that Skill, to which, without those Forms, he never would have attained : The Case is the same with respect to those Literary Affassins, who think it their Interest to extinguish the Light of Reason and Religion in the Minds of Men ; whose Attempts to undermine our Faith, and to deprive us of our best Ground of Comfort in the Day of Necessity, it is our Duty to oppose with every possible Preparation of Mind for the Attack. The Argument is exceedingly interesting and important : The Adversary is generally wary, and always indefatigable ;

ble ; and a Defeat would be highly injurious to the Cause, which every Christian most earnestly wishes to defend. From this Science therefore we are to learn, to make a judicious Application of the Means of Defence, which the Scriptures afford us ; and which, in the Hands of a Man of Knowledge and Discretion, will prove *sharper than any two-edged Sword*, and demonstrate the Impotency of all Opposition, which is levelled against the Majesty and Truth of GOD.

To an Ignorance of those Documents, and to the Want of that Precision, with which the Art of Reasoning supplies us, the most unreasonable Errors in Religion may be principally imputed, as well as the most irrational Defence of those Errors. Our Conception of Subjects, without this Knowledge, is generally imperfect and confused ; and our Discourse is irregular and vague : A warm Imagination, undisciplined by this Science, precipitates weak Minds into Enthusiasm ; and renders Men violent Abettors of those Doctrines, which they have not thoroughly digested, and zealous Advocates for those Opinions,
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which they are altogether unable to support. Of this every Day's Experience too sadly convinces us ; there being no Tenet so antisciptural or absurd, as not to have met with a favourable Reception among those, who are under the Influence of an ignorantly zealous Mind.

To be able, then, to give, on every proper Occasion, *a Reason of the Hope that is in us*, by a thorough Acquaintance with the Proofs of the Gospel-Revelation, argues a very commendable Progress in that Knowledge, whereby the Glory of God, the Welfare of Men's Souls, and the Honour of Religion, are most effectually promoted.

BUT it may be proper to observe, that this, as well as other Kinds of Knowledge, is unhappily liable to great Abuse ; which I by no Means mention, as an Argument against the Pursuit itself, but as a Caution to such, as may be tempted to a Perversion of that Science, which, under a proper Application of it, is of essential Use : If a clear Perception, assisted by Precepts, and improved by Experience, hath attained to a Degree of Skill in Argumentation,

tation, the Effect may possibly be a disputatious Turn of Conversation, and an ambitious Affectation of Novelty or Victory, rather than a laudable Desire of investigating Truth. This should be particularly guarded against, as it tends to bring the most valuable Gift of God, and Man's most excellent Endowment, into Contempt.

To stand forth in the Cause of Divine Truth, and to support the Defence of it by Arguments well chosen, thoroughly digested, and happily applied---I do not scruple to affirm to be the most honourable and worthy Employment of a rational and devout Mind.

4thly. FROM the Exercise of our Faculties in the Way of Argumentation, we are led one Step farther, to trace out the Omnipotent Wisdom of God in the instructive Volume of created Nature: By the Scale of which, the Mind most readily ascends to its Great Author. Ignorance of Nature will produce Ignorance of Religion, and readily lead Men to Superstition: Of this we have the fullest Evidence, when we consider, that the most

superstitious Ages were those, in which Men were deplorably ignorant of the Powers and Operations of Nature.

THE Scripture continually refers us to Visible Objects for the Explanation and Proof of Things Invisible: And our Saviour reproves the Unbelieving *Sadducees* for understanding *neither the Scriptures nor the Power of God*: To the latter of which had they attended in the Natural Creation, as it is pointed out and commented on by St. Paul, it had scarcely been possible for them to have doubted of the Resurrection of the Body.

To this Study of the Wonders of Nature, many other Branches of Learning come in as Auxiliaries, and are indeed necessarily connected with it; all of them together giving Occasion to the noblest Exertion of the Intellectual Faculties. For Causes and Effects, so far as they are *Quantities*, are properly the Subjects of *Mathematical* Enquiry, and can only be estimated by *Mathematical* Rules. But amidst all our Researches, we are ever to remember, that while the Eyes of the Body are intent upon Nature, the Attention

tion of the Mind must be fixed upon God ; and that an irreligious Philosopher is such a Monster in the Intellectual World, that his Talents, however admired and exalted, must needs be regarded with Abhorrence by superior Beings.

THE Misapplication of *this* Science consists in suffering our Enquiries to fall short of God ; in forgetting the Supreme Efficient Cause, whilst we are engaged in the Consideration of the Nature and Qualities of those intermediate Agents, by which, at the Commandment of the Most High, the World is governed and preserved : In giving a Loose to the Reins of Fancy ; and indulging Speculations not grounded on Facts well ascertained or properly understood. This is so far from answering the End of true Philosophy, the Increase of our Veneration of the Attributes of God, that it generally terminates in downright Atheism.

THE Christian Philosopher pursues *his* Enquiries on a very different Plan ; making them all, in some Degree or other, subservient to his own spiritual Benefit, and to the Interests of true Religion. He may

not perhaps have attained to that *very* eminent Degree of Spirituality, which some Men affecting, have treated every Species of Human Learning with a sovereign Contempt; but being persuaded, that all Knowledge is only so far really valuable, as it makes Men more pious towards God, and more serviceable to Mankind, his Application is always directed to this Point; and all his Contemplations lead him to adore the Wisdom, Power, and Mercy of His Great Creator.

5thly. AN honest Enquiry after Truth having hitherto engaged the Attention of One, whom we suppose to have been trained up in the Principles of useful Knowledge, what remains, but that he be studious to adorn and embellish all his other Attainments with the Graces and Beauties of Elocution? That, whenever he shall be called upon to deliver his Sentiments, a good Subject may have every Advantage, which it is capable of receiving, from an eloquent Tongue, expressing the Dictates of a well-instructed Mind. This we have the best Authority for calling the *Glory* of Man; and the most precious

cious Gift of God, next to the Endowment of a rational Soul. *Awake up, my Glory, saith the Psalmist; I will praise my God with the best Member that I have.*

WHEN I speak of Elocution, I mean by it the Art of communicating Knowledge or Conviction in the most persuasive and agreeable Manner; or, such an Address to the Understanding and to the Passions of Men, as is neither subversive of Truth, nor calculated to involve it in Obscurity; its principal Intention being rather to elucidate and adorn it.

FOR a competent Skill in this Art, our Application must be made to those, who are acknowledged to have excelled in it themselves; and whose Manner and Method may be of eminent Use, tho' it may not be prudent always to adopt their Principles.

WITHOUT entering on the several Divisions made by Rhetoricians on this Subject, I shall only observe, that different Properties and Effects are assigned to the several Kinds of Eloquence. The argumentative Parts of it enlighten and convince our Judgement: Its great and lively

lively Images excite our Attention; its strong and vehement Expressions command our Assent; while its pathetic Tenderneſs ſecures our Affections and captivates the Heart.

To deſpiſe this Part of Education, which to ſome may perhaps appear to have more of Ornament than Uſe in it, is to encourage very unworthy Sentiments of God and of ourſelves. It favours more of Ignorance and Indolence than of true Humility, voluntarily to ſuppreſs thoſe Talents, which are only given to enable us more eſſentially to promote the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind. And it is the Height of Preſumption, to think ourſelves a Match for the Corruption of the World, and the Sophiſtry of the Devil, without the Aid of thoſe Advantages, which are abſolutely neceſſary in other Profeſſions. It is no Excuse for our Indifference, that the Goſpel, at its firſt Promulgation, flouriſhed in Deſpight of all Oppoſition, under the Miniſtration of Perſons diveſted of external Advantages. *Their* natural Defects, or the Diſadvantages of their Education were
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all supplied and remedied by the extraordinary Effusion of that Spirit, which was able to *guide them into all Truth*; but which we, since the Establishment of Christianity, have no Reason to expect. Divine Truth, like all other sound and useful Knowledge, is now attainable only by a regular Discipline, and a close Attention to those Writings, in which it is contained; and it is to be communicated with Advantage to others, only by the Persuasive Influence of Graceful Elocution.

AND if by one animated *Philippic* a whole Nation could be roused from a State of timorous Inactivity; and a Thirst of Glory universally excited; what Encouragement may not the *Christian* Orator hence receive, to address himself in good Earnest to this captivating Art? who, in the Course of his Ministration, will often have Occasion, and ought therefore never to want Ability, to convince the Erroneous, to reclaim the Vicious, to quicken the Careless, to inform the Ignorant, and to comfort the Dejected; and, in a Word, to bring all, over whom
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the Providence of God hath placed Him, to a timely Regard of *the Things which belong to their Peace.*

THESE I conceive to be the Out-lines of that Great and Extensive Plan, the Execution of which is committed to the Charge of such Seminaries as ours : And to which a more pressing Consideration cannot be offered than this ; viz. That the Glory of GOD, the Benefit of Mankind, and the Continuance of true Religion amongst us, have an immediate Dependence on the Principles, which are here inculcated and imbibed.

THE Human Mind, however degenerate thro' the Fall of Man, is possessed of Powers, which will not suffer it to be insensible of its Importance in the Scale of created Beings. It will ever be exerting itself in one Way or other, and will not lie down in a State of torpid Negligence, or useless Despondency. Its Designs are often very great and extensive ; and it is restless and full of Sollicitude, 'till those Designs are accomplished. There are very few Minds so abject as never to reflect, that they are more than Cyphers in the
World ;

World; that they have a Character to support, Advantages to improve, Graces to cultivate, and Abilities to employ. Of what infinite Consequence is it then, that these busy Faculties should be properly controuled? That their Views should be wisely and carefully directed to such Ends, as are worthy of the Regard of a rational and accountable Creature? And in what Part of our Life is this to be done, I say not, to Advantage, but at all, if it be neglected, while the Mind is open to Conviction, and no Party is yet formed by the Affections, to oppose the Dictates of Religious Wisdom? Yet is the Outcry become unhappily too prevalent against the Prejudices of Education: and Men who call themselves Christians, and Friends to the Happiness and Freedom of Mankind, are neither afraid nor ashamed to assert, that the Minds of young Persons ought not to be subject to any Discipline whatsoever in Religious Matters; that, when the Faculties are strengthened, their Enquiries may be free, their Judgment unbiassed, and their Determinations altogether liberal, ingenuous and impartial.

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To such Assertions as these, which may be considered as having the most dangerous Tendency, it may be sufficient briefly to reply, That they are grounded on a Supposition, which is contradicted both by Reason and daily Experience; viz. that it is possible to preserve the Mind in a State of absolute Freedom from Prejudices of *every* Kind; and that our sinful Passions can with a cold Neutrality receive and obey such Injunctions, as strike at the Root of every forbidden Gratification; and that, at a Time when our head-strong Appetites are most impatient of Controul.

THE contrary to all this is true, viz. that if we are not early prepossessed in Favor of Religion, which inculcates the Necessity of Holiness, as the only sure Ground, thro' Faith in Christ, of our present and future Hopes; other Prejudices will undoubtedly take Place, in Favor of vicious Indulgence, which will render us *deaf to the Voice of the Charmer, charm he never so wisely.*

SUCH Principles as these, therefore, it is easy to perceive have an immediate Tendency to extirpate the Knowledge and
Practice

Practice of true Religion. Not only a wretched Ignorance of the fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel must ensue, but also a deplorable Indisposition to religious Instruction : And the miserable Effects of either would be very sensibly felt in this Place, if the Great Work, which these venerable Societies are intended to accomplish, were now to be begun; or if the Minds of the Youth committed to your Charge were so many *rasæ tabulae*, to speak most favourably of them; much more, if they came hither, prepossessed by certain Principles, unfavorable to true Religion, and subversive of all Regularity and Order.

INSTEAD therefore of looking upon the Abettors of such Opinions, as Friends to the *Liberty*, or to the *Happiness* of Mankind, let them ever be considered as the avowed Enemies of both:—Of their *Liberty*, as tending to withdraw Men from the Service of God, into a vile Subjection to their sinful Lusts; and of their *Happiness*, as wishing to expose them helpless and unarmed, to the Assaults of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Let

them be considered as the Patrons of *Infidelity* on the one Hand, and of *Enthusiasm* on the other; each, the genuine Offspring of that Ignorance, which is consequent on a neglected or ill-conducted Education. The former of these finds a ready Access to the Minds of Persons, whose natural Disposition inclines them to Sensuality; whilst others, less prone to *carnal* Excesses, become an easy Prey to Intemperance of a different Nature. For these, not having been gradually trained up in the Principles of the Christian Faith, and being, on a sudden, admitted to the View of those sublime and affecting Doctrines, which the Gospel presents to them, are dazzled with Truths, which they have not had Opportunity to explore; and zealously avow those Opinions, which they have not coolly and deliberately examined. Hence it is, that they go forth into the World, possessed of more *Heat* than *Light*, unlearned and unstable; laboring with a Zeal becoming a better Cause, to seduce their Hearers from the Ways of Truth.

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THIS Evil, which we have so great Reason to lament in *our* Days was remarkably prevalent in the Infancy of the Reformation; at which Time, if illiterate Men recovered any ancient Doctrine, they were generally so unhappy, as to blend it with some capital Errors. Their Writings and Discourses were the Productions of Zeal, untempered with the Sobriety of Education. "They had Flourishing without Fruit," says the Historian, "Subtlety without Substance, Rhetoric without Reason, Babbling without Learning, and Wiliness without Wit." How much the Truth hath, in all Ages, suffered, from the Incompetency of those, who have rashly undertaken to become Teachers of it, is a Subject of deep Concern to every one, that wishes Prosperity to Religion. And with what Caution it behoves the Guardians of such Seminaries as these to act, lest the Purity of Divine Truth be corrupted by incompetent Ministers, their late Conduct on a very memorable * Oc-

* The Expulsion of illiterate Enthusiasts from St. *Ed. Hall.*

casion precludes the Necessity of my observing in this Place. Yet doth Justice demand of me this public Declaration, that their Resolution to preserve this Fountain pure, whose Streams are diffused thro' every Quarter of the World, will be a lasting Monument of their genuine Piety, and of their prudent Concern for the Interests of true Religion, even to our latest Posterity.

To conclude: As the Whole of Religion is declared to be *a reasonable Service*, all the Principles of it must be established on rational Grounds: Whatever System of Faith is built on the Credit of any Revelation, ought to be ultimately resolved into a rational Proof of the Truth of that Revelation, which is adduced to support it. And it is in *this* Respect that Human Learning hath been of such eminent Service to the Cause of Truth. Superstition and Idolatry may fairly be dated from that Time, in which Men declined all rational Proof of their Religion, and sunk into implicit Belief, and ignorant Devotion. But surely, even the deepest Mysteries have a reasonable Claim to our Assent, when they

they are offered to us under the Sanction of that Revelation, of the Divinity whereof our Judgment is convinced on the most serious and dispassionate Enquiry. Since therefore the very Existence of Christianity depends on the Credit and Authority of the Holy Scriptures, it is the great Concern of the Christian Church to vindicate their Infallible Authenticity : And to these Seats of Learning doth she look (and Blessed be God, she hath never yet looked in vain) for Advocates both able and willing to justify their Veneration for that *Book*, as written by Persons divinely inspired, and delivered to us by God, as that Supreme Law, by which He would inform, and rule, and judge the World. Nor *will* she ever want Advocates of this Sort, so long as the wholesome Discipline here established shall be preserved ; and so long as the most important Doctrines of our Religion shall continue to be carefully inculcated, as indispensably necessary in the Education of a Minister of the Gospel.

THE most malevolent Attacks upon the Christian Faith, the most virulent Invectives against the Establishment and Discipline

pline of the Church, the most specious Arguments in Defence of unreasonable and absurd Opinions, highly prejudicial to the Truth, have been put to Silence by a *Full Answer* from Persons, whose Labors do equal Honor to this Seminary and to themselves; and entitle them to every Acknowledgement that the most important Services, in Behalf of Christianity, can demand. Let such then be ever held by us in particular Esteem: Let us highly honour those for their Works' Sake, who have not suffered Heresy and Schism to triumph with an Air of insolent Superiority, in a confident Defiance of all Opposition; but by unanswerable Arguments have vindicated the Reasonableness, the Truth and the Excellence of the Christian Religion. Let us, as far as we are concerned, be careful, that none of those committed to our Charge may hereafter either dishonour their Profession by a sinful Compliance with the Evil Practices of the World, or prejudice Men against the Gospel, by mixing pernicious Errors with the fundamental Truths of Christianity. If any, thro' a licentious Turn of Mind,
should

should be led aside into the former, or thro' Ignorance corrupting the Purity of the Gospel-Faith should run into the latter, however we may lament their Misconduct, let us take Heed, that nothing be chargeable upon ourselves. Let it not be our *Fault* (let it suffice to be our *Great Misfortune*) that in this Unadulterated Soil, any noxious Weeds should spring up, whose baneful Influence may overspread the beauteous Garden of the Church of God: This Soil, which I shall not hesitate to call the Seed-Plot, from which the Principles of sound Knowledge, Scriptural Orthodoxy, Practical Holiness, together with those of Loyalty and dutiful Subjection to Government, have been for Ages, and are daily, transplanted into the most distant Regions of the habitable World.

Lastly. LET each of us, in particular, remember, that the *End* of all *Knowledge*, as well as of the Commandments, is *Charity*, or the Love of God and Man; that it is this which *edifieth*, while the other being alone, serves only to *puff Men up* with a vain Conceit of their Superiority

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to the rest of Mankind. Let us be studious to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour by a Life of strict Conformity to His Will; and let our Obedience undeniably declare, that we are Professors of the best and purest Religion in the World.

LET the Light of our Knowledge and good Works be displayed before all Men, that they may be constrained to confess, that God indeed is amongst us; directing all our Counsels by his Wisdom, assisting all our Actions with His Grace; and leading us thro' the Paths of Truth and Righteousness, to the Kingdom of Light and Life and Glory; thro' the Merits of Jesus Christ our LORD.

To whom, &c.

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